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ABSTRACT

Since the school boycott at the on-reservation St. Regis elementary school in 1968, the Mohawk Indians have made major strides toward achieving greater educational opportunity, cultural awareness, and community self-determination. Under the leadership provided by the chiefs and the 3 elected committees--education, housing, and library culture center--a number of programs have been initiated which have served to improve the quality of life on the reservation and open new opportunities for Mohawks. Beginning with the library project the Mohawks have attempted to bridge the barrier to tribal unity created by the international border (United States and Canada) that divides tribal lands. Planned programs in education, health, and economic development are aimed at further reducing this artificial division of the Mohawk community. There exists a growing sense of pride in the community by virtue of the accomplishments achieved over the past 6 years (1968-74). The presence of the cultural center and the initiation of mohawk language and cultural-history courses in the schools has contributed substantially to increasing Mohawk tribal identity and self-awareness. The sense of unity and community strength which developed out of the school boycott has enabled the Mohawks to begin the long road to regaining control of their community. Membership on the school board and voting rights in school elections have made the school districts more responsive to Mohawk needs. (FF)

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SOUTHWESTERN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

1974 ANNUAL MEETINGS

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON THE ST. REGIS (AKWESASNE) MOHAWK RESERVATION

March 29, 1974

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History

The Akwesasne Mohawk Community which is located on the St. Regis Reservation in northern New York has lived continuously in this area since 1755. The founding of the St. Regis Mission pre-dates by a half century the opening of the North Country to white settlers from Vermont and the Mohawk valley. The original settlers of St. Regis were Christian Mohawks from the Caughnawaga Indian mission settlement near Montreal, Quebec. The Caughnauaga mission had been established in 1735 by French Jesuit missionaries who lead a group of converted Mohawks to the St. Lawrence Valley from their castle villages near Schenectady.

From the beginning St. Regis provided sanctuary to other Indian peoples who were driven from their tribal homeland as a result of warfare and expanding white settlement. Shortly after the founding of the mission Mohawks from the Mohawk Valley migrated to St. Regis. The Abenaki of the St. Francis River settlement which was destroyed by Rogers Rangers were given refuge in 1759, and in 1760 a group of Onondagas from the Oswegatchie settlement were taken in when the British scattered their mission village.

Even though St. Regis evolved as a conglomerate ethnic settlement, the language, customs, and traditions remained Mohawk. The three historical Mohawk clans - - Turtle, Wolf, and Bear - - retained their identity and continued to play a prominent role in the socio-political life of the tribal community. The St. Regis Mohawks replaced the Oswegatchis in the French organized

Seven Nations of Canada Indian Confederation. This Confederation lasted until the 1840's. It was not until 1888, however, that St. Regis was formally designated as the "Mohawk Nation" of the Iroquois Confederacy, occupying the vacant seat in the grand council. This seat was created by the migration of the Joseph Brandt Mohawks to the Six Nation reserve in Ontario, Canada at the conclusion of the American Revolution.

After 1783 the St. Regis Mohawks, negotiating on behalf of the Seven Nations, made claims to land which they occupied in Northern New York. Finally in 1796 the title to land was resolved when New York established a six mile reservation at St. Regis and granted the tribe a small annual annuity. However, the Revolution and the Treaty of Paris created a major barrier to political unity of the Mohawk community by splitting the reservation into two entities along the forty-fifth parallel. Until the War of 1812 St. Regis continued to be treated by both countries as one distinct political entity.

During the War of 1812 the British stationed a garrison at St. Regis village and pressed Mohawks into service. This act created internal disharmony as many tribal members wished to remain neutral or favored the American cause. After the war in 1817, the international boundary was again redrawn. At this time St. Regis became two separate political entities - - one under the supervision of British Canada, and the other subject to the laws of New York State. The Jay Treaty of 1795 had provided for innocent passage across the international border without duty for the Mohawks but no other provisions were included in the treaty

to recognize their special status or to mitigate the difficulties created by the international border splitting the geographical and political unity of the tribe.

During the 1825-1840 period the Mohawks residing in New York were under severe pressure to ceed their land and relocate in the newly organized territories of Michigan and Wisconsin. Only the widespread opposition to a treaty engineered by the Ogden Land Company and signed by some of the Mohawk chieftans prevented the St. Regis Mohawks from being moved to Michigan. However, tribal land was alienated by treaties which surrendered Mohawk land in Fort Covington and Massena, New York. Other Iroquois tribes in New York were less fortunate and substantial land cessions and removals were negotiated with the Senecas, Oneidas, and Cayugas.

A further bar to tribal unity was created when Canada passed the Indian Act of 1876. This act provided for registration of band members on the Canadian side of St. Regis (approximately one-half of the population) according to the lines of patrilineal descent. Traditional descent among the Iroquois has been matralineal and the State of New York has recognized this proceedure in determining tribal rolls. The effects of this dual system of establishing tribal descent and eligibility for inclusion on the tribal rolls has been to disenfranchise tribal members who marry Mohawks across the border. This lineage problem has not yet been fully resolved.

The situation as it stands today is that the 6,000 Mohawks are divided by an arbitrary international border which continues to be a major barrier to tribal unity and to the effective

organization of the Mohawk community to achieve common goals. Each side of the reservation has its own separate political system, elected officials, tribal rolls, legal, and educational systems. For over 160 years this artificial political division of the Mohawk community has worked to their disadvantage by encouraging factionalism and frustrating tribal self-determination and Mohawk identity. On the Canadian side the major barrier has been the strong paternalistic attitude of the Indian Affairs Branch. Mohawks in New York State have lacked the legal right to control major areas of tribal life, including the education of their children. Two events - - the school boycott of 1968 and the 1969 international bridge blockade - - can be viewed as major attempts to re-awaken tribal identity, forge tribal unity, and reclaim community control.

The School Boycott and the Bridge Blockade

On April 22, 1968 the St. Regis Mohawks withdrew their children from the on-reservation St. Regis elementary school. This action was taken by the Parents Education Committee and had the support of chiefs and tribal members. The immediate reason for the school boycott was the striking of a Mohawk student, but this incident merely highlighted a number of long standing grievances the Mohawks had concerning educational policies of the Salmon River School District. The principal grievances were lack of Indian representation on the school board, no parent-teacher association, lack of curriculum materials on Mohawk culture and history, failure to hire Mohawk teachers and service personnel, and using money

appropriated by the State legislature (2.3 million dollars) for "Indian education" without consulting the Mohawk community.

The boycott lasted one full week. Before the Mohawks consented to return their children to classes representatives from the State Education Department, the Governor's office, and the State legislature were called in to hear their grievances and respond to a set of ten demands drawn up by the committee. Chief among these demands were: 1.)the right to vote in school board elections, 2.)the right to serve on the school board, 3.)introduction of language and Mohawk culture-history classes in the curriculum, 4.)opposition to phasing out the all-Mohawk reservation school, 5.)hire Mohawks in the school system, 6.)greater respect for Mohawk children. A major impasse was averted when the school district permitted Mohawks to vote in the 1969 school election, and added two additional seats to the school board to which Mohawks were elected.

Subsequently, through the efforts of the tribe, its lawyer, and Assemblyman Joseph Pisanni of New York City a State law was inacted in 1970 which grants New York State Indians the right to vote in school board elections and to serve on those boards. Commenting on the boycott Minerva White, Chairwoman of the Mohawk Education Committee, has said: "The boycott brought the reservation closer together since the one thing we all agree on at St. Regis is that our children should have a good education."[1] Seen in a larger context the successful boycott at St. Regis enabled all Indians in New York State to gain a share of control in their children's education and began a new era of Indian Education in

this State.

The success of the school boycott on the American side of the reservation prompted the Canadian band to employ confrontation tactics to achieve the settlement of a long standing grievance concerning their rights under Article III of the Jay Treaty. A ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada had the effect of nullifying the "right of duty free passage" for Mohawks across the United States-Canadian border. The United States continued to honor the Treaty in full; but Canada began to stop and require Mohawks to declare purchases and pay duty when necessary.

On December 18, 1969 more than two-hundred Mohawks gathered on Cornwall Island, Ontario (reservation land) to blockade the roadway to the International bridge across the St. Lawrence River. Forty-eight Mohawks, Canadian and American, were arrested for obstruction. Since the issue of free passage involved abregation of treaty rights the bridge blockade drew wide support for the Mohawks from other Indian groups. Although the question is not yet legally resolved, bills to create enabling legislation to bring the provisions of the Jay Treaty into force have been introduced in Parliament. Canadian customs officers have used greater restraint in searching Mohawk vehicles crossing into Canada. At the same time Mohawks on the American side of the border have petitioned the United States Government to bring diplomatic pressure to bear on Ottawa to honor the Jay Treaty and to pass legislation bringing the provisions of the Treaty into force.

The school boycott and the bridge blockade stand out as two of the very early actions by Indian communities to achieve greater

self-determination and respect for treaty rights. These confrontations have given to the Mohawks a greater sense o. self-awareness, community pride, and recognition that only thro.gh community participation and control will Indian goals be achieved. What has transpired since 1968-1969 is in a large part due to the sense of unity and renewed strength which was achieved during the school boycott and bridge blockade.

Improving Education Opportunity

Shortly after the school boycott the members of the Mohawk Education Committee met with representatives of St. Lawrence University in response to an inquiry from the college concerning educational assistance to Mohawk students. The Mohawk parents were concerned about high drop out levels and poor academic performance of their children in school. They requested tutorial assistance from the college. Under the supervision of the Education Committee a tutoring program was initiated in September 1969; it is now in its fifth year. Three evenings a week St. Lawrence students travel forty-five miles to the reservation for tutoring. On the average about eighty Mohawk students in grades four through twelve participate in tutoring which is conducted at the St. Regis Mohawk school and the Akwesasne Library-Cultural Center. Tutoring is offered in eighteen different subjects at varying grade levels. Since tutoring began in 1969, the number of Mohawk dropouts has sharply decreased and the number going on to post-secondary education has steadily increased. (See Table on Page 8.)

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ON THE ST. REGIS (AKWESASNE) MOHAWK RESERVATION

Program	Staff	Participants 1973-74	Total	Cost per year	Years in Prog.
Right to Read	4*	37	59	$25,000	2
College level extension	9 (2)*	70	110	16,500	2
Adult Education (GED)	8	16	28	2,500	3
Tutoring (grades 4-12)	45 (tutors)	80	450	4,000	5
Upward Bound (grades 9-12)	12 (7)*	50	105	70,000	4
Pre-Upward Bound (grades 5-8)	6 (3)*	80	130	10,000	3
Special Services (Mohawks only)	4*	120	120	30,000	1
Title IV	13*	885	-	110,000	1
Indian Teacher Educ. Program	4 (2)*	72 (26)*	-	17,800	1
Special Services Summer Bridge for Pre-College Students	10*	35	75	50,000	1
SCOPES - Science and enrichment program for H. S. students	10 (5)*	15	50	20,000	1

355,800

* Native Americans

This year, 1974, thirty-eight out of forty-five Mohawk seniors will be going on to post-secondary education. The Mohawk dropout rate for the high school class of 1974 is twenty-seven percent; in 1969 it was fifty-four percent.[2] Although tutoring is not singly responsible for improved educational performance of Mohawk students, it has played a significant role in the community's effort to improve educational opportunities for its youth. One of the most gratifying aspects of the tutoring to the Mohawk community is the fact that several Mohawks who were students in the early years of the program are now college tutors in the program.

At a tutoring evaluation session in the Spring of 1970, members of the Mohawk Education Committee and St. Lawrence tutoring staff identified the need for a reservation library as an important educational priority. As there was no public transportation on the reservation and the nearest public and high school libraries were twelve miles away, students and many adults had no recourse to a library for research and reading interests. The idea to build a library won the approval of the chiefs and tribal members. The annual benefit box-lacross game in April launched the library drive. Ground was broken in October 1970; in eleven months the library was completed. The St. Lawrence students and the Mohawks, through a variety of fund raising projects, raised over $17,000 for building materials and $5,000 for books. Through the assistance of ther Herkimer Rotary Club an anonamous gift of library furniture was donated. Federally assisted manpower programs - - Operation Mainstream and Job Corps - - provided the money to pay the Mohawk men who built the library. The Cultural Center was completed

eighteen months later. The entire staff of the library and cultural center is Mohawk and the Board of Directors comprises tribal members from both the American and Canadian side of the reservation.

With the completion of the Mohawk Library-Cultural Center additional educational services were instituted. A questionnaire was sent to all tribal members to ascertain educational needs and priorities. One major interest identified was opportunities for adult and continuing education programs on the reservation. A federally funded Right-to-Read program was started in 1972. In a period of two years fifty-nine Mohawk adults have participated in the reading program. In the same year classes in adult education were initiated. Eighteen Mohawks enrolled in the high school equivalency program the first year; twelve passed the examination at the completion of the course. The instructors in the adult education program are St. Lawrence tutors and Mohawk instructors. In 1973 classes in basic adult education - - eighth grade level education - - were begun for those individuals who have completed the Right-to-Read program.

Encouraged by the community interest in adult education the Education Committee in cooperation with two local colleges - - North Country Community College, Saranac Lake, and Mater Dei, Ogdensburg - - began college level classes at the Library-Cultural Center in the Fall of 1973. Currently there are seventy-two Mohawks enrolled in six credit extension courses. At the completion of sixty hours, students will receive an Associate of Arts or Science degree.

The class project in the business practices course in 1973

led to the establishment of a marketing cooperative for handmade Mohawk baskets. This cooperative has made possible a wider market for Mohawk crafts and an increased income to the craftsmen and women.

The Education Committee is currently investigating the possibility of establishing a satelite center of Empire State College on the reservation which would provide opportunities for Mohawk adults to obtain a four-year degree through a combination of course work, work study, and life experience education.

From its early beginnings the tutoring program for Mohawk youths has developed into a year-round program. In the Spring of 1971 the Education Committee and St. Lawrence University agreed upon the need for a summer component on the St. Lawrence campus for Mohawk high school students. This program would stress reading and communication skills, math, science, and Mohawk language, culture, history, and crafts. Originally the University intended to fund the summer program privately. However, in May 1970 the U.S. Office of Education indicated that it would be willing to fund an Upward Bound program at St. Lawrence for Mohawk students. Upward Bound is now in its fourth year; over one hundred Mohawk high school students have participated. The average number of Upward Bound graduates going on to post-secondary education in each of the four years has been fifteen.

Two major problems concerning Upward Bound remain to be solved. First, the number of Mohawks who may participate is limited to fifty. Second, no provision exists to fund Mohawks on the Canadian side of the reservation. In regard to the first

problem, the Education Committee and the Upward Bound program have asked for an increase in enrollment for the fiscal year 1974-75. Concerning the second problem, the Canadian Mohawk Band Council has requested the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for funding to permit Canadian Mohawks to participate in Upward Bound. If this could be achieved the Upward Bound program would be serving all Mohawks and contributing to tribal unity. There is strong concern to include Mohawk students on the Canadian side where student dropout rates approach eighty percent in the schools Mohawks attend.

In the Summer of 1972 a pre-Upward Bound program was initiated for Mohawk students in grade levels five to eight. A major reason for the development of this summer program for students at the middle school level was the concern of the Education Committee that Mohawk students were being tracked into the non-Regents curriculum because of performance levels and traditional counseling practices in the schools. An analysis of the records of the Upward Bound students revealed that if this cycle of high school dropout and non-Regents placement was to be reversed it has to be attacked at the pre-high school level.

Reading ability has been one of the major problems of this age group and a strong focus of the pre-Upward Bound program has been the improvement of reading skills. In addition, the pre-Upward Bound students have classes in Mohawk language, culture and crafts. Pre-Upward Bound is unique in that it is perhaps the first program of its kind to focus upon the academic problems of Indian students at the pre-high school level. The response by the students

and the parents has been enthusiastic and the program will continue in the summer of 1974.

In the span of five years the Mohawks have greatly expanded educational opportunity for all tribal members. One hundred-twenty Mohawks are now participating in programs of post-secondary education and an active adult education program at all levels is well established on the reservation. The year round tutoring program and summer academic enrichment programs have greatly contributed to the reduction of school dropout and the improvement of academic performance. The establishment of the Mohawk Library-Cultural Center has provided the necessary space and resources to support these programs and extend readership services to the entire reservation population of 6,000 people. The improvement of educational opportunity has been central to the other major efforts on the reservation to achieve economic viability and community control.

Improving Housing on the Reservation

One major disadvantage of living on an Indian Reservation in New York State is the inability to qualify for home mortgages. Since reservation land cannot be alienated without full tribal approval a potential Mohawk homeowner cannot put his land up as collateral for a mortgage. Only the Senacas on the Cataragus-Allegany Reservation in southwestern New York have a housing authority to guarantee bank loans for enrolled tribal members. This has been made possible by virtue of the monies received from the Kinsua Dam settlement.

If a Mohawk wants to build a home he must pay for it fully or apply for a personal loan to the bank. Such loans are usually restricted to $2000 or less and are repayable in short periods of time. In order to cope with this problem, the housing shortage, and the general disrepair of several homes on the reservation, the Mohawks created a housing authority in 1972. All nine members are elected to the housing authority which is incorporated. Major housing decisions are made only after open meetings of the housing authority with tribal members. A major breakthrough in the housing problem was made in 1972 when former Indian Commissioner Louis Bruce (Mohawk-Souix), at the request of Mohawk Chief Lazore, obtained a favorable ruling from the United States Solicitors Office concerning eligibility of Indians in New York State for federal support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Until that time, with the exception of limited college scholarship aid, New York State Indians were denied federal assistance and could not qualify for B.I.A. programs.

Since the housing authority has been in existance two major programs have been started. One, the Housing Improvement Program (H.I.P.) funded through the B.I.A., has made possible the improvement of fourteen reservation homes during 1973-74; an additional twenty homes are scheduled for repair in 1974-75. The total dollar amount of the H.I.P. grant is $87,000. None of the work is sub-contracted; all labor is performed by Mohawk workmen. In order to use as much of the grant money for materials as possible the wages for the seven H.I.P. laborers are paid by federal manpower programs. Those families with the most pressing

housing repair needs have received first priority. The H.I.P. program has also provided on the job carpentry training for workers and part-time summer employment for college students.

In an effort to respond to the need for more housing the tribe has obtained, through the housing authority, eighty five house trailers in the past two years. These have gone to replace substandard housing and homes that were beyond repair. Again, in order to avoid dissention, the housing authority surveyed housing needs and established priorities for trailers. The only cost to the individual family has been the installation of the trailer on the property. These two housing programs were made possible by the aggressive leadership of the chiefs and the housing authority. Moreover, as a result of the efforts of the Mohawks, all New York State Indian reservations are now eligible for B.I.A. supported housing programs.

Expanding Community Health Programs

The first building project undertaken by the Mohawks, after the completion of the library-cultural center, was a new community health clinic. The old clinic, located on the second floor of the St. Regis Mohawk school was crowded, inadequate, understaffed, and difficult to reach for older people. The equipment in the physician's examining room was old and space limited. The tribe, along with St. Lawrence students, began a fund raising drive in 1972 to build the new clinic which adjoins the tribal house and library-cultural center. In order to speed the construction of the clinic the chiefs allocated $30,000 of

the tribes' first federal revenue sharing monies to the clinic. The labor was provided by Mohawk men working under the direction of Chief John Jacobs. The New York State Department of Community Health provided new furnishings for the clinic--first of its kind on a New York State reservation. The new facility was formally opened in the spring of 1973. The clinic is staffed by two Mohawk nurses and a Mohawk receptionist, and a visiting physician. The clinic is easily accessable and home visits to confined individuals are provided by the nurses.

A second community health concern has been the pollution of well water on the reservation. After a survey by the State Health Department in 1968, $86,000 was authorized to improve wells and sanitation facilities on the reserve. To this date sixty five new wells have been dug; sanitation facilities have been improved in over fifty reservation homes. Through the federal surplus equipment program the tribe has obtained its own well-digging equipment and is continuing to improve water and sewage facilities on the reservation.

Although the 1968-69 well project responded to an immediate tribal need the manner in which it was funded, operated, and responded to local concerns came under strong criticism. Chief Lazore has commented that "after seeing how the well project was carried out I knew that we had to have greater control over community projects, because, for all the good it did, the way in which it was handled created divisiveness and hard feelings at St. Regis".[3] Not only did the Mohawks believe that they were "ripped-off" by contractors in the well project;

but, also, the determination as to who would receive priority in the project was politically determined. Since the tribe has taken over the well drilling, priorities for wells and sanitation facilities have been determined in line with the policy set forth by the housing authority.

Law Enforcement and Emergency Services

For the first time in its history St. Regis has its own law inforcement system. Under a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (L.E.A.A.) the reservation has round the clock police protection and highway patrol. Prior to this time the state police and the county sheriff's department shared responsibility for police protection on the reserve. The critical need for highway patrol on the reservation can be illustrated by the fact that the number of highway fatalities on the reserve has been reduced from twenty two to four per year in the short time that the Mohawks have instituted their own law enforcement. Driving while under the influence of alcohol has been a major problem in automobile accidents; the tribal leadership has moved resolutely to curb this. One additional advantage of community law enforcement has been that the police officers are Mohawk; the previous tensions which existed between outside law enforcement authorities and younger Mohawks has been greatly reduced.

The Mohawks are still dependent upon the volunteer fire and emergency services of neighboring communities. Attempts are being made to secure surplus government vehicles for fire and

rescue service. Added interest in organizing a reservation emergency squad and fire service has been generated by two major fires in the last year which resulted in five fatalities. Currently the nearest fire and rescue squad to the reservation is twelve miles away. Emergency ambulance and rescue service is a priority need as a highly traveled state highway bisects the reservation and passes through residential living areas.

Economic Development on the Reservation

The new programs in education, housing, health, and law enforcement have created thirty four full time jobs for Mohawks. There are few other employment opportunities on the reservation. The geographical area in which the Mohawks are located is quite economically depressed which results in high unemployment rates. Primarily, through the efforts of former Chief John Cook and Harry Pike, President of the Library Cultural Center Board, the main industries surrounding the reservation--Chevrolet, Reynolds Aluminum, Alcoa Aluminum--have begun affirmative action programs in employment. There are now approximately forty Mohawks employed by these industries; most of these workers have been hired in the last five years. Twenty one Mohawks are employed by the Salmon River school system as teachers or teachers and counselors in the Title IV Indian Education Program.

The majority of Mohawk men are structural steel workers. Some four hundred Mohawks work high steel. This heavy concentration in "iron work" is not only the community's main source of income, it is, also, a major factor in Mohawk identity and

community pride. Although high steel pays well, it is highly seasonal work and subject to the jobs available in the construction business. Steel workers are likely to be without employment for months at a time. Working high steel forces Mohawk men to be away from the reservation for long periods of time. As a result Mohawk women have been forced to play a larger role in family and community responsibilities. Currently the reservation leadership on both sides of the border is investigating the possibility of establishing an incorporated Mohawk structural steel firm. This would be similar to the efforts of President Frank Bonomy of the Cayuga Nation who has organized a heavy construction firm which employes Cayugas.

The headquarters of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority is in Massena, a community near the reservation. This federal authority has employed few Mohawks over the years. With new guidelines for minority employment in federal agencies the Seaway Authority could provide future jobs for qualified Mohawks.

The advent of revenue sharing has enabled the tribe to expand tribal administration and increase community services. Among the one hundred twenty Mohawks now in post-secondary education many plan to return to the reservation to live and work. The chiefs are concerned that there will not be sufficient employment opportunities available on and off the reservation to hold these people. They do not want the "academic brain drain" of educated Indians from the reserves to the cities which characterized the 1950's and early 1960's to be repeated. With improved equal employment opportunities and a higher education

level, many of the Mohawks presently in higher education will qualify for nearby jobs in education, industry, and public service.

Stregthening Mohawk Cultural Awareness

One of the principal greviances of the Mohawk school boycott was that the school system did not provide for the teaching of Mohawk language and culture-history. Through the efforts of the Education Committee the Salmon River school hired the first Mohawk language teacher, Joseph White, in January 1971. Today the Mohawk language is taught for credit in all four elementary and secondary schools by four Mohawk teachers. A Mohawk dictionary has been developed; shortly a Mohawk grammar book will be published. Instruction in the language begins in pre-kindergarten and continues through grade twelve.

The teaching of Mohawk and Iroquois culture-history began in 1972 when Chief Lazore was hired by the Salmon River school as a social science teacher. In the fall of 1973 a Title IV Indian Education Program began at the Salmon River school and Massena schools. Under the provisions of Title IV thirteen Mohawks were hired to provide language teaching, instruction in culture-history, Mohawk curriculum development, counciling, and career placement services.

Title IV grants are awarded directly to tribal groups to insure their control of the monies and direction of the program. At St. Regis the entire Title IV staff is Mohawk; the director, David Jacobs, recently completed his masters degree

in psychology at the University of Utah.

Along with the Title IV program the programs at the Akwesasne library-cultural center contribute to strengthening cultural awareness. Classes in Mohawk culture, beadwork, and basketmaking are offered at the center. Craft work and artifacts are on exhibit and used for instructional purposes at the cultural center. An extensive collection of books, periodicals, and newspapers focusing on Native Americans has been developed by the library staff. In January 1973 three Mohawk students attending St. Lawrence University developed an extensive annotated bibliography on Mohawk materials. During the past two summers Mohawk students enrolled in the Upward Bound program have undertaken a project to accumulate materials for a tribal history of St. Regis.

Efforts to Encourage Mohawk Tribal Unity

Since the 1969 bridge blocade the leadership of the Canadian and American Indians of the reservation have worked to improve tribal unity and resolve common problems jointly. In the past two years the three elected American chiefs have been meeting with twelve Canadian tribal band councilors. Previous to this time no official interchange had taken place between the two leadership groups. The Canadian band has actively supported the development of the library-culture center project. The band council has contributed money for books, staff, equipment, and a converted school bus to serve as a bookmobile. The bookmobile serves the entire reservation

and stops weekly at pre-determined places in the four geographical areas of the reserve.

Mohawk students residing on the Canadian side of the reserve are bussed to the library in conjunction with research projects, reading hours, and cultural programs. Canadian band members participate in adult and college level classes at the library-cultural center. The library cultural center publishes an all reservation newsletter. If the Canadian government approves, the Upward Bound program will include Mohawks from both sides of the reserve.

The chiefs and band councilors are exploring, in addition to the Mohawk steel fabrication project, the feasability of two other joint ventures--a reservation nursing home, and an Indian controlled school on the reservation. However, there are limits to what the Mohawks can do to achieve greater tribal unity. Until such time as the State of New York and the Canadian Government are willing to allow greater community control of reservation life the same barriers to unity will exist. The Mohawks on both sides of the reserve have demonstrated the ability to cooperate on issues of mutual concern. They continue to work toward greater tribal unity through joint efforts in economic development, nursing home facilities, education, and cultural activities.

Mohawk Leadership in Indian Affairs

Through the process of revitalizing Mohawk life and culture at St. Regis, the Mohawks have made significant con-

tributions to the larger Indian cause. The boycott which gained representation on the local school board benefited all tribal communities in New York State. The favorable rulings which the Mohawks were able to obtain on federal responsibility for New York State Indians made possible the channeling of B.I.A. monies and programs into New York for the first time. The Akwesasne Library-Culture Center constitutes the first all Indian operated and controlled library in the eastern United States. In recognition of what the Mohawks have done in the development of library services the National Indian Education Association has designated the Mohawk library as one of its three national demonstration projects. The community health center at St. Regis has been pointed to by leaders in Indian health as a model for other reservation communities to follow.

Perhaps the Mohawks most important contributions to Indian welfare have been in the field of education. Two of the founders of the Iroquois Conference for Unity and Involvement are Mohawks--Chief John Cook, and Minerva White. Since its founding in 1970 one of the major goals of the Iroquois Conference has been improvement of Indian education. Conference discussions contributed to the development of a draft position paper on Native American education which is presently before the New York State Regents for approval.

The Mohawks were the first New York State tribe to secure approval for credit based Indian language and culture-history classes in school. The on-reservation educational programs for adults beginning with Right-to-Read and extending

through college level courses is a forerunner of educational services to reservation communities in the future.

The St. Regis Mohawks and St. Lawrence University have been designated as one of the sixteen national Indian Teacher Education demonstration projects. In cooperation with the Massena and Salmon River school districts in-service and pre-service training is being provided to seventy five teachers in Mohawk culture, history, and educational needs. The goals of the project are to develop a greater sensitivity to the needs of the Indian student and to provide a teacher training module for prospective teachers of Mohawk students.

Two programs which have had national attention have developed from the St. Regis Mohawk-St. Lawrence University educational partnership--the Summer Institute on the American Indian Student in Higher Education, and Native American Special Services. The summer Institute began in 1971 and is now in its fourth year. In an effort to highlight the problems the Indian college student faces, and to suggest some concrete steps colleges can take to improve the educational opportunity for Indian students, over 7,000 copies of the Institute proceedings for 1971 and 1972 have been distributed to colleges, Native American communities, and public agencies.

The Native American Special Services Program provides educational services--tutoring, counseling, remedial instruction--to full and part-time Indian students attending post-secondary schools in New York State and New Jersey. A staff of thirteen Native Americans is currently providing these education services

to three hundred students attending fifty different colleges in the two state area. By recognizing that the Indian college student has special needs, Native American Special Services attempts to provide the necessary supportitive programs to the student in cooperation with both the tribal and college community. This summer special services will conduct a six week pre-freshman bridge program for Native American students on the St. Lawrence campus. The program will concentrate on improving communication and study skills, and reading ability. Deficiencies in these areas have been identified as principal causes of low student achievement and college drop out.

Summary

In the six years since the school boycott the Mohawks have made major strides toward the achievement of greater educational opportunity, cultural awareness, and community self-determination. Under the leadership provided by the chiefs and the three elected committeess--education, housing, and library-culture center--a number of programs have been initiated which have served to improve the quality of life on the reserve and open new opportunities for Mohawks. Beginning with the library project the Mohawks have attempted to bridge the barrier to tribal unity created by the international border. Planned programs in education, health, and economic development are aimed at further reducing this artificial division of the Mohawk community.

There is a growing sense of pride in the community by

virtue of the many accomplishments achieved over the past six years. Mohawks are proud of their library, the new community health center, improved housing, and expanded educational opportunities. They are also proud that one hundred twenty of their young people are attending college; and that high school dropouts have been reduced to one-half the 1968 figure. These accomplishments were not secured without a major community effort which required hundreds of hours of volunteer time and personal sacrifice.

The presence of the cultural center and the initiation of Mohawk language and culture-history courses in the schools has contributed substantially to increasing Mohawk tribal identity and self-awareness. Among the young people there is increased interest in Mohawk crafts, dancing, and music.

The sense of unity and community strength which developed out of the successful school boycott has enabled the Mohawks to begin the long road to regaining control of their community. Membership on the school board and voting rights in school elections has made the school district more responsive to Mohawk needs. Through prudent use of revenue sharing money the tribe has been able to take over more community functions and improve services. This responsiveness to community needs has been a principle factor in reducting factionalism and fostering tribal unity.

Footnotes

1. Roy Sandstrom, ed., Educating the Educators, (Canton, N.Y.: St. Lawrence University, 1971), p. 31.

2. Records Mohawk Education Committee, Tribal House, Akwesasne, N.Y.

3. Interview with Chief Lawrence Lazore.

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